

Non-Trinis applying for a visa

Question: I am not yet a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, but have been living here for many years. Can I apply for a visa to the USA? What are some qualities of a successful visa applicant?

- Eve from Chaguanas

Any person from any nationality may apply for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa at any U.S. Embassy in the world, including the U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain. However, applying in the country where you have the strongest ties will give you the best opportunity to qualify for a nonimmigrant visa, since the requirements for obtaining a nonimmigrant visa include showing strong family, social and economic connections to your “home” country. If you have not lived in Trinidad and Tobago long enough to establish these ties, we recommend you return to your own country and apply at the U.S. Embassy there. However, if you feel you have stronger connections to Trinidad and Tobago, you are more than welcome to apply through the normal visa application process outlined on the Embassy website at <http://trinidad.usembassy.gov>

On the other hand, we strongly discourage applicants who come to Trinidad for the express purpose of applying for a U.S. visa (sometimes referred to as “visa shopping”). Sometimes, due to seasonal demands or staffing issues, neighboring countries in the region may have longer wait times for visa interviews than here in Port of Spain. But these wait times change throughout the year, and you should not apply here in Port of Spain just because you think it will be faster. To reiterate, you should apply for a visa only in the country where you have the strongest personal, professional and economic connections.

Please note that there are many things that can determine strong family, social and economic ties to your home country, which are used by the interviewing officers to determine your suitability for a visa. Some important criteria include previous travel outside the country, previous visas to the U.S. and other countries (and how long you stayed each time you were there), current travel plans in the U.S., and long-range goals in your home country.

For more detailed information, and additional tips on applying for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa at the U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain, please visit our website at <http://trinidad.usembassy.gov> or email us at consularpos@state.gov.